

## Valé Terry Hampson AM



19.11.1935 – 22.09.2014

If you have ever visited Fraser Island and plunged your hands into some of the purest water in the world, skimmed down a slope of white sand into the almost unbelievable blue of Lake Wabby, marvelled at nature's kaleidoscopic artistry in the sand-hills, or walked in awe among commanding, ancient rainforest trees, you are able to do that largely because of Terry Hampson. If not for Terry's legendary partnership with John Sinclair, the guts would have been ripped out of the island during the 1970s and 1980s, and those tall trees would have been hacked down.

The battle began during the Bjelke-Petersen era, when environmentalists were scoffed at and branded as Communists. The Hampson/Sinclair duo ultimately achieved World Heritage Listing and National Park status for the island. Sinclair was the front man; Terry was the indispensable nuts-and-bolts strategist and tactician, with his web of political contacts.

In addition, if not for Terry and his associates, many other precious sites of environmental value in Queensland may have also been destroyed or allowed to degrade without protection against inappropriate development. He was still in demand to the end, playing a role in negotiations to oppose sand-mining on Stradbroke Island. He was fond of saying:

You can't divorce ecology from economics nor can you divorce quality of life from quality of the environment. It is in our interests to act now.

Australia needs a National Energy Industrial Policy that would ensure a credible and useful domestic strategy showing the world Australia is serious about greenhouse gas abatement and fostering new industry and jobs.

Terry's achievements for the environment were enabled through his intense political liaisons within the Australian Labor Party. He joined the Labor Party in 1965 and became branch secretary at his first meeting. His first project was to help organise a meeting in Brisbane with Aboriginal leader Charlie Perkins, who had recently undertaken the 'Freedom Ride', a bus tour of western and coastal New South Wales towns, in order to protest against discrimination against Aborigines in those areas and to highlight the appalling state of Aboriginal health, education and housing.

During the years that followed, Terry held almost every role in his local ALP branch and other party entities. He was involved in the Reform movement during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Within the Queensland organisational wing of the party, he held (sequentially) the roles of Administrative Officer, Assistant State Secretary and then State Secretary from 1988 to 1991. During that time, he managed the campaign which ushered in Jim Soorley as Lord Mayor of Brisbane City Council.

Terry was a passionate advocate for democratic functioning with the party, for the rights of ordinary members to have their voices heard on policy and selection of representatives, as well as encouraging participation by women and recognition of their contribution. Many people in politics polarise; Terry always sought to unify.

In the ten years from 1994 to 2004, he was Councillor for the ward of Marchant in the Brisbane City Council, where he became respected throughout the area and beyond, for his genuine involvement in gaining benefits for the community. Together with the Lord Mayor, he worked to improve the environmental sustainability of Brisbane. He retired from paid employment in 2004.

Terry was a Fabian first and Labor second, with a strong belief in social and economic justice. He was the only Life Member of the Fabian Society in Queensland.

An extraordinary mentor, he drew people into active involvement in many organisations, perceived talents in others and helped them to recognise and develop their capacities.

In his final year of life, Terry still actively participated in discussions on anti-nuclear policy, and was a key leader in establishment of the Senator George Georges Peace and Nuclear Disarmament Scholarship within the School of Political Science at the University of Queensland.

Among many tributes, Terry was honoured with an Order of Australia, an Australian Centenary Medal and was named a Queensland Champion of Conservation.

One facet of his immersion in the world of ideas that he inhabited was his insatiable thirst to learn, his respect for History and the messages it reveals. Terry was a true 'jigsaw man', with broad interests: indigenous justice and reconciliation, refugees, the value of multiculturalism, sport (especially tennis), music (especially Celtic), reading and travel.

Terry and his wife, Ann, were 'The Terry and Ann Machine', working as a team with unwavering determination, to make things happen to achieve the objectives they held dear.

The Hampsons travelled the world on many occasions, including when they received an invitation for a VIP trip to Russia just after the election of the Labor government in Queensland in December 1989 – a victory for which Terry, as State Secretary, had worked so hard. The trip was offered as a reward for those efforts.

When he died on holiday in Cambodia on 22 September 2014, Terry had just explored with great delight the temples of Angkor Wat.

He was loyal, dogged, psychologically tough, forgiving, considerate, optimistic, analytical, perceptive, wise ... and endless similar adjectives.

Terry Hampson was not a physically strong man; he had endured many health problems, including four bouts of heart surgery – the most recent in November last year. He was a man of small stature, but he made an enormous impact and he leaves a huge hole in the lives of his family and friends. The world is poorer for his departure.

If you would like to be notified about publication of Terry's biography, please contact Fran Ross at [franpross@bigpond.com](mailto:franpross@bigpond.com).